

RIVERSIDE YOUTH COUNCIL



VOTING RESOURCE AND INFORMATION GUIDE

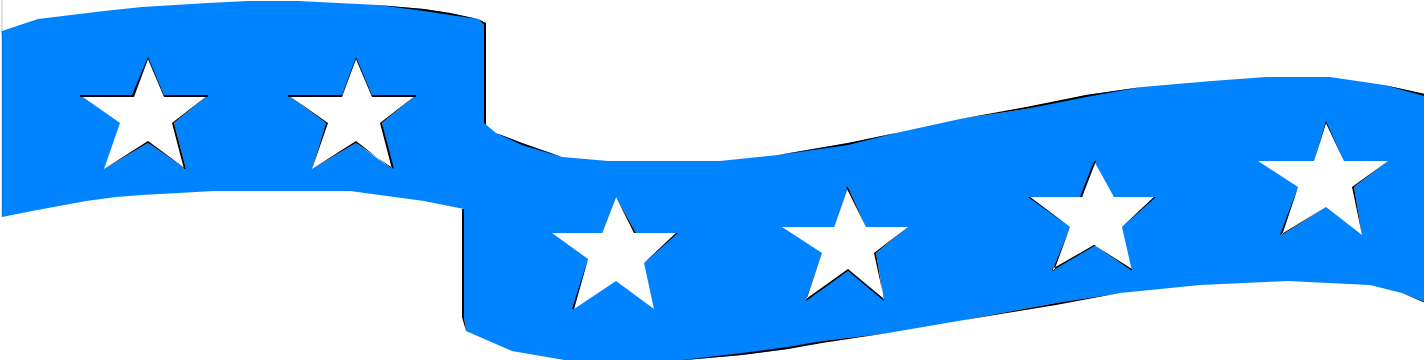


ELECTION



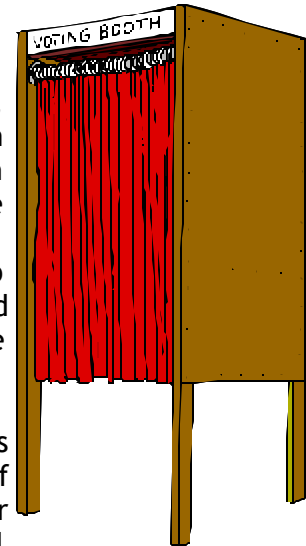
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How Voting Laws Have Changed Since 1870

If voter turnout statistics are a true indicator, the United States, the world's leading democracy, is one of the few countries in which the right to vote is taken lightly; one of the few places in which many people just don't bother to speak up at the ballot box. More than six million Californians who are eligible to vote haven't even registered, millions more who have registered don't bother to go to the polls. The right to vote is one of the most important rights and duties of American citizenship. It is the keystone of democracy, the basis by which we establish the "consent of the governed."



The millions of Californians who aren't voting are letting others make decisions for them; they have turned over the shaping of government to others. In the not-too-distant past, the voter registration system itself limited registration. Literacy tests, poll taxes, requirements that a voter be a landowner, inaccessible polling places and other barriers limited access to many groups of potential voters. People fought, struggled, and sometimes died to protect and expand the citizen's right to vote. The following laws were enacted as a result of these efforts.

Elective Franchise:

Right of Citizens to Vote: *"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."* (Constitution of the United States Amendment XV, Section 1, ratified February 3, 1870)

Equal Suffrage:

Equality: *"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."* (Constitution of the United States Amendment XIX, Section 1, ratified August 18, 1920)

Qualifications of Electors:

Poll tax: *"The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President/Vice President, for electors for President/Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by a state by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax."* (Constitution of the United States Amendment XXIV, Section 1, ratified January 23, 1964)

Voting Age:

Eighteen: *"The right of citizens of the United States, 18 years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by a state on account of age."* (Constitution of the United States Amendment XXVI, Section 1, ratified July 1, 1971)

Today voter registration is easy. In order to register to vote, you must be a citizen of the United States, a resident of California, at least 18 years old by the day of the next election, not in prison, or on parole for the conviction of a felony, and not deemed by an appropriate court to be mentally incompetent.

How do young people feel about civic participation...

SPECIFICALLY, POLITICAL PARTICIPATION?

ACCORDING TO A SURVEY BY THE "NEW MILLENIUM PROJECT" SPONSORED BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECRETARIES OF STATE (NASS):

- YOUNG PEOPLE WANT CHOICES—NOT DICTATES. MOST SAY THEY ARE NOT "ASKED" TO VOTE, SO THEY DON'T.
- THE ISSUES THAT MATTER TO YOUNG VOTERS AREN'T ALL THAT DIFFERENT FROM OLDER VOTERS: EDUCATION AND VIOLENCE TOP THE LIST, FOLLOWED BY THE ECONOMY AND JOBS.
- YOUNG PEOPLE THINK POLITICS ISN'T RELEVANT TO THEIR EVERYDAY CONCERNS. THEY SEE POLITICIANS AS OUT OF TOUCH AND GOVERNMENT AS TOO SLOW.
- A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE SAY THEY DON'T VOTE BECAUSE POLITICIANS DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO THEM. MEANWHILE, POLITICIANS DON'T ADDRESS YOUNG PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY DON'T VOTE. IT'S A CYCLE THAT IS FRUSTRATING ON BOTH SIDES AND IT NEEDS TO BE BROKEN.
- WHILE MANY YOUNG ADULTS DON'T FOLLOW POLITICS CLOSELY, THEY DO PAY ATTENTION TO THE ISSUES. IF IT'S HAPPENING TO THEM, THEY ARE INTERESTED.
- YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T TRUST POLITICIANS BECAUSE THEY'VE BEEN RAISED IN A TIME PERIOD DOMINATED BY POLITICAL SCANDALS, AND THEIR PARENTS ARE JUST AS CYNICAL. THEY CRAVE HONESTY, STRAIGHT-FORWARDNESS, AND AUTHENTICITY IN CANDIDATES.
- YOUNG PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT POLITICIANS PANDER TO A FEW BIG INTERESTS. THEY ARE LEFT FEELING POWERLESS BY THE ROLE OF MONEY IN POLITICS, SINCE THEY CAN'T AFFORD TO MAKE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS.
- MANY YOUNG ADULTS SAY THEY DON'T KNOW **WHERE** OR **HOW** TO VOTE. A LOT OF THEM SAY THEY DON'T FEEL INFORMED, AND THEY DON'T FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE THE BASIC SKILLS TO VOTE.
- YOUNG ADULTS ARE MORE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE THAN MANY MIGHT THINK. THEY ALSO SEE GOVERNMENT AS HELPFUL IN THEORY, BUT NOT RELEVANT TO THEIR EVERYDAY LIVES.
- YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPOSED TO PARENTS, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITIES THAT ENCOURAGE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ARE FAR MORE LIKELY TO PARTICIPATE THEMSELVES.

POWER OF ONE VOTE:



IN 1645: ONE VOTE GAVE OLIVER CROMWELL CONTROL OF ENGLAND



IN 1649: ONE VOTE CAUSED CHARLES I OF ENGLAND TO BE EXECUTED.



IN 1776: ONE VOTE GAVE AMERICA THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTEAD OF GERMAN.



IN 1839: ONE VOTE ELECTED MARCUS MORTON AS THE GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS.



IN 1923: ONE VOTE GAVE ADOLPH HITLER LEADERSHIP OF THE NAZI PARTY.

**ONE VOTE DOES MAKE A
DIFFERENCE!**

✓vote

STATE BY STATE YOUTH VOTE: 2000

The following are the percentages of 18–24 year-old citizens in each state who voted in the 2000 presidential election. States are listed from highest to lowest and rounded to the nearest percentage point. States where sample sizes are too small to reliably estimate youth turnout are not included (AK, DE, DC, HI, MT, ND, RI, SD, VT, WY). Nationally, 36% of 18–24 year-old citizens turned out to vote.

| | | | |
|----------------|-----|----------------|-----|
| Maine | 51% | Kansas | 36% |
| Wisconsin | 51% | Idaho | 36% |
| Iowa | 47% | New Jersey | 36% |
| Minnesota | 46% | Florida | 35% |
| Louisiana | 44% | New Hampshire | 35% |
| Mississippi | 44% | Kentucky | 34% |
| Connecticut | 43% | New York | 34% |
| Virginia | 43% | Georgia | 33% |
| Oregon | 41% | West Virginia | 33% |
| Massachusetts | 40% | Indiana | 33% |
| Illinois | 40% | Nebraska | 32% |
| Alabama | 40% | Texas | 32% |
| Utah | 40% | Pennsylvania | 32% |
| Washington | 40% | Nevada | 31% |
| Maryland | 39% | North Carolina | 31% |
| South Carolina | 38% | Missouri | 31% |
| Ohio | 38% | Colorado | 30% |
| Michigan | 38% | Arizona | 26% |
| California | 37% | New Mexico | 24% |
| Arkansas | 37% | Tennessee | 24% |
| Oklahoma | 36% | | |



FACT SHEET

CIRCLE

The Center for Information & Research on
Civic Learning & Engagement

Quick Facts about Young Voters: 2004

By Mark Hugo Lopez, Emily Kirby, and Billy Grayson¹
September 2005

In 2004, voter turnout among young people surged to its highest level in more than a decade. Below is a snapshot of voter participation in the 2004 elections.²

Estimates of Eligible Young Voters, 2004

Number of 18-24 year old American citizens eligible to vote: 24.9 million
Number of people in this group who voted in the 2004 elections: 11.7 million or 47%

Number of American citizens over 25 eligible to vote: 172.1 million
Number of citizens over 25 who voted in the 2004 elections: 114.1 million or 66%

Turnout Among Eligible Young Citizens, age 18-24

47% of young citizens ages 18-24 turned out in 2004 (up 11 percentage points from 2000)

50% of the white population voted (up 11 percentage points from 2000)³
47% of African Americans voted (up 11 percentage points from 2000)
36% of Asian Americans voted (up 8 percentage points from 2000)
33% of Latinos voted (up 7 percentage points from 2000)

59% of college citizens voted (up 11 percentage points from 2000)
34% of non-college citizens voted (up 9 percentage points from 2000)

51% of single women voted (up 12 percentage points from 2000)
46% of single men voted (up 10 percentage points from 2000)
44% of married women voted (up 5 percentage points from 2000)
38% of married men voted (up 5 percentage points from 2000)

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CIRCLE was founded in 2001 with a generous grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts and is now also funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. CIRCLE is based in the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy.

Notes

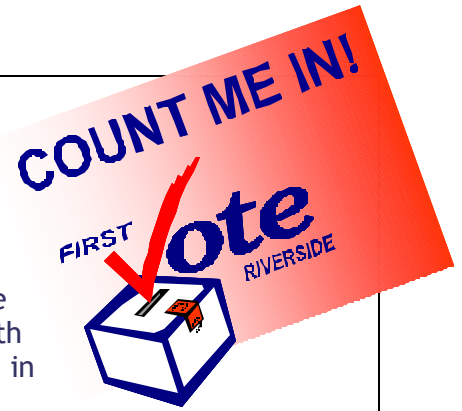
¹ Research Director, Research Associate, and Graduate Assistant, respectively.

² For a full discussion of the different ways voter turnout can be calculated please see "CIRCLE Working Paper 35: The Youth Voter 2004: With a Historical Look at Youth Voting Patterns 1972-2004." All voter turnout estimates presented in this fact sheet are calculated for U.S. citizens only, and according to the "Census Citizen Method" described in CIRCLE Working Paper 35.

³ We have defined racial/ethnic groups in the 2004 CPS November Supplements by defining anyone with Hispanic background as Latino, single race or ethnicity individuals who are non-Hispanic as white, African American, Asian American or Native American, and those of mixed race/ethnicity as a separate category. Since 2003, the CPS has allowed survey participants to mark more than once racial/ethnic category in describing their backgrounds. This potentially means that 2000 and 2004 may not be entirely comparable when identifying race and ethnicity categories of survey respondents. All programs used to generate race and ethnicity variables are available from the authors upon request.

YOUTH VOTING TRENDS 2004

Youth voting surged by 11 percentage points in 2004. In presidential election years between 1972 and 2000, the turnout rate had declined by 16 percentage points among young citizens before rebounding by 11 percentage points in the 2004 election. It remains to be seen if the increase in youth turnout in 2004 is part of a new trend or is instead a spike in youth electoral participation like the 1992 election.



In 2004, 47% of 18-24 year old citizens voted, 66% of citizens 25 and older voted.

Single young people, particularly women, are more likely to vote than married young people. The turnout among single women age 18-24 led the way and increased by 12 percentage points, or about one third, since 2000.

Source: *The Youth Vote 2004*

Young women voted at higher rates than young men in the 2004 election. 50 percent of 18-24 year old women and 44 percent of young men voted in 2004.

Source: *Voter Turnout Among Women and Men*

In 2004, much of the surge in youth voting was driven by an increase in voting among African-American youth. African-American turnout fell off in the 1988 election and remained relatively stable until the 2004 election, in which African-Americans experienced a jump in turnout of more than 11 percentage points over 2000—the greatest increase in turnout of any racial or ethnic minority group during the recent election cycle.

Source: *Electoral Engagement Among Minority Youth*

Despite concerns that college students would face barriers when casting their votes, nearly nine in ten reported that they thought voting was easy. Less than four percent said they tried to register but were unable to do so. Only a handful (less than 1%) claimed that they went to the polls but were not allowed to vote.

Source: *College students in the 2004 Election*

YOUTH TURNOUT BY STATE 2004

In 2004 youth voter turnout was highest in Minnesota (69%), Wisconsin (63%), Iowa (62%), Maine (59%), and New Hampshire (58%).

In 2002 youth voter turnout was highest in Minnesota (52%). South Dakota, Alaska, Alabama, and North Dakota had rates over 30%.

Source: *Youth Voter State Map*

VOTING LAWS AND YOUTH TURNOUT

States that allow Election Day registration, on average, have youth voter turnout rates that are 14 percentage points higher, and they are more likely to be contacted by a political candidate.

Three of the top five states for youth voting in 2000 allowed Election Day registration (MN, WI, ME).

Other state laws that seem to increase youth voting are: early voting at convenient locations and voter registration at state motor vehicle agencies.

In states that mailed sample ballots & information about polling places and extended polling place hours, youth turnout increased by about 10 percentage points.

Source: [Easier Voting Methods Boost Youth Turnout](#) and [How Postregistration Laws Affect the Turnout of Registrants](#)

GETTING OUT THE VOTE

Young people are the best GOTV resource available. A young person (aged 18-25) asking another young person to vote raises the likelihood of turnout by 8-12 percentage points.

Personal contact is a more effective method of persuading a young person to vote than either direct mail or telephone calls, and is much cheaper.

The average cost per new vote by door-to-door canvassing is approximately \$8; the average cost-per-vote for direct mail is approximately \$40; Partisan mail is the most expensive voter outreach strategy with an average cost of \$400 for each vote gained.

In CIRCLE's 2002 National Youth Survey, 65% of 15-25 year olds say that issue the first or second most important consideration in choosing a candidate.

Source: [Getting Out the Youth Vote in Local Elections: Results from Six Door-to-Door Canvassing Experiments](#) by Donald P. Green, Alan S. Gerber, and David W. Nickerson

Personally contacting young people on Election Day can significantly increase youth voter turnout, but only if they've already expressed interest in voting.

Source: [The Effects of an Election Day Voter Mobilization Campaign Targeting Young Voters](#) by Donald P. Green

LOCAL POLITICAL PARTIES AND YOUTH

About nine-in-ten local party leaders say youth political engagement is a serious problem.

93% OF LOCAL PARTY LEADERS FEEL LOCAL PARTIES CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN POLITICS.

ONLY 8% OF THE PARTY CHAIRS IDENTIFIED YOUNG PEOPLE AS THE MOST IMPORTANT DEMOGRAPHIC FOR THE "LONG-TERM SUCCESS OF THEIR PARTY," COMPARED TO 21% WHO NAMED SENIOR CITIZENS.

PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTIONS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Primary Elections

A Primary Election is a **nominating election** in which voters in each political party choose the nominee who will run against the other political parties' nominees in the General Election. For example, Republicans run against other Republicans and Democrats run against other Democrats for their respective party's nomination. California has adopted a Modified Closed Primary system, which restricts voters affiliated with a political party to the choice of candidates of that political party. Under California law, political parties may determine whether to allow non-partisan voters (who declined to state a political party affiliation when they registered to vote) the opportunity to cast a ballot for their party's candidates.

Once you arrive at your neighborhood-polling place, a poll worker will give you the party ballot for the party you registered with (each is designated by a different color). This ballot must be voted in the booth containing the ballot choices for that party. Each non-partisan voter receives a non-partisan ballot. If a non-partisan voter chooses to cast votes for a political party that allows "cross over voting," he or she will vote in the booth for that political party.

General Elections

A General Election is held for voters to choose among the candidates nominated in a primary election for federal, state and local offices. The purpose of a general election is to make a **final choice** among the candidates nominated at the previous Primary Election. All voters at the assigned voting precinct vote the same ballot regardless of party affiliation. Voters select from among the candidates of the various political parties.

PROVISIONAL VOTING

- A voter is asked to vote a provisional ballot at the polls due to one of the following reasons: **The voter's name is not on the official roster of voters and the election officer cannot verify the voter's voting eligibility on Election Day.** The Elections Official's Office will check the registration records. If further research determines that the voter is eligible to vote in the election, the provisional ballot will be counted.
- **A voter has moved within the county, but did not re-register to vote.** The Elections Official will verify the voter's prior registration before the provisional ballot will be counted. The voter's registration will then be updated with the voter's current address.
- **Records indicate that the voter requested an absentee ballot and the voter fails to turn in the absentee ballot at the polls on Election Day.** The Elections Official's Office will check the records, and if the voter did not vote an absentee ballot, the voter's provisional ballot will be counted.
- **The voter is a first- time Federal Election voter in the county and was unable to provide the required proof of identification.** The Elections Official's Office will verify the voter's eligibility to vote by comparing the signature on the voter's registration with the signature on the provisional ballot envelope.

Provisional ballots are counted during the official canvass when: Prior to the completion of the claimant's right to vote.

By order of the Superior Court in the county of the voter's residence, a voter may seek a court order to require his or her ballot to be counted, at any time prior to the completion of the official canvass. Any judicial action or appeal shall have priority over all other civil matters.

THE OFFICIAL CANVASS OF THE VOTE

Immediately upon the close of polls on election day, the county elections officials and the Secretary of State begin what is called the "semifinal official canvass of the vote" - the tallying of early-returned absentees and the ballots cast in each of the state's 21,796 voting precincts. The semifinal official canvass begins at 8:00 p.m. on election night and continues uninterrupted until the last precinct is counted and reported to the Secretary of State.

The vote tallying process actually begins before election night, with the absentee ballots. Any county that counts its ballots by computer (all 58 do) may begin processing absentees seven (7) days before the election. Having verified the signatures on the return envelopes, elections officials remove the voted ballots and process them through their vote tallying system. **Under no circumstances** may they tabulate the results until after the close of polls on Election Day. Most counties continue this processing until they begin their election-day preparations for counting the precinct vote. Mail ballots not counted by that time and all those received on Election Day, either through the mail or at the precincts, are tabulated during the official canvass of the vote.

YOUTH VOTE COALITION

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Young people are not participating in civic life in large numbers these days, and the candidates are not paying attention. Nationwide, roughly 33 percent of 18-to-24-year-olds turned out to vote in 2000--arguably the closest and most contentious presidential election in modern history. This alarmingly low turnout record--part of a twenty-five year trend of decline--gives many state election officials cause for alarm. When those numbers are coupled with the fact that most high school students have never set foot inside of a polling place, the future of American democracy seems pretty bleak.

Determined to curb this decline in youth participation, the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) established the New Millennium Young Voters Project in 1998 to try and re-engage more young people in the democratic process. NASS began by conducting a national, nonpartisan study, which revealed that young people ages 18-24 are dropping out of the electoral process because they lack interest, trust, and knowledge when it comes to American government. They don't see their citizenship as an opportunity for involvement, they don't know how or where to get the information or skills they need for greater participation in civic life, and above all, they just don't make it to the polls on Election Day.

The 1998 NASS New Millennium Report also showed that traditional motivational strategies aren't working well with this age group. Consequently, NASS is constantly trying to identify new and innovative ways to provide our country's young people with the information and skills they need to become motivated, educated and informed citizens. The association seeks out these model election outreach programs to share with the nation's secretaries of state.

THE NEW MILLENNIUM PROJECT

New Millennium is a national campaign designed primarily to increase civic engagement levels among the nation's 18-24 year-olds. The 1998 NASS New Millennium study showed that traditional motivational strategies aren't working well with this age group. We're looking for creative and participatory solutions to provide our country's young people with the information and skills they need to become motivated, educated and informed citizens. See our website at: www.stateofthevote.org

New Millennium Project Goals:

- Improve voter turnout rates among 18-to-24-year-olds and enable young voters to make informed choices.
- Help provide strategies and messages for getting young people engaged in political and civic participation.
- Promote civics education in schools.
- Raise public awareness about the importance of youth participation in government and the political process.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY OF YOUTH VOTING PROGRAMS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Youth Outreach Programs: 72% of states conduct youth outreach of some variety.

Partnerships: The most popular partnerships are with the National Student/Parent Mock Elections, Kids Voting USA, and Rock the Vote.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|
| Capitol Forum | 10% | Close Up Foundation | 23% |
| Kids Voting USA | 54% | NASS Vote America | 28% |
| National Student/Parent Mock Election | 67% | Newspapers in Education | 10% |
| Rock the Vote | 38% | Smackdown Your Vote | 31% |
| Youth Vote Coalition | 10% | Youth-e-Vote/Freedoms Answer | 21% |
| YMCA Youth | 15% | Vote for America | 5% |

Working with local/county election offices to help promote voting: 85% of Secretary of State offices partner with local/county offices to help promote voting among young people.

Election Day workers under 18: 74% of states have laws that allow for Election Day workers under the age of 18.

Election Worker Laws: Yes 74% No 26%

Partnering with Schools: 87% of state offices partner with schools to promote voting among young people.

Partnering with Community Organizations: 80% of state offices partner with community organizations to promote voting among young people.

Methods of reaching Youth about Voting:

56% of state offices use Citizenship Presentations to reach out to young voters;
69% of state offices use Internet Resources to reach out to young voters;
38% of state offices display voting equipment to potential young voters;
67% of state offices use PSA's and/or Radio spots to reach out to young voters;

Ages of Focus:

59% of state offices work with Elementary age youth to promote voting;
90% of state offices work with High School age youth to promote voting;
72% of state offices work with College age youth to promote voting;

Same-day Registration: Only 13% of states have same-day registration laws, and 31% of the states that do not have same-day registration have put forward legislative proposals to do so.

HAVA Voter Education Programs: 72% of state offices plan to introduce new voter education programs for teens/or twenty-somethings as a result of HAVA funding.

Poll Worker Recruitment & Training Programs: California: Ventura County Adopt-a-Poll Program